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Wednesday, 17 June 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 41 (*continued*)

Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS

Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/812)

Notes by the Secretary-General (A/63/152 and Add.1)

Draft decision (A/63/L.73)

Mr. Fluss (Israel): Israel would like to thank the Secretary-General for the report on the progress made towards the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (A/63/812). Israel would also like to thank the Secretary-General for convening the High-level Forum two days ago on advancing global health in the face of crisis. It was an important opportunity for Member States to learn more about confronting current urgent health problems and to reaffirm our commitments to improving global public health, including with regard to HIV/AIDS.

In August of 2001, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. This resolution was subsequently reaffirmed in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS in 2006. Since that time, there have been incredible efforts to address and mitigate the spread of this lethal virus.

But our goal — to achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS by next year — remains beyond our reach. This is alarming. HIV/AIDS continues to plague our youth. In 2007, a total of 5.5 million young people between the ages of 15 to 24 lived with HIV. What is most terrifying is that nearly half of that number, or 2,550,000 of those youths, are girls living in sub-Saharan Africa.

As we heard two days ago, Botswana is an exemplary model of how a national holistic approach, based on political recognition, political will and political decision, can confront terrible adversity and deliver inspiring results.

We must renew our commitments to halt and reverse the spread of HIV with unprecedented dedication and drive. In particular, our focus must be directed towards women and girls. Our efforts must be comprehensive and holistic. We believe that one important approach to thwarting the spread of HIV/AIDS is to utilize preventive education that is directed towards health professionals, teachers, community leaders and especially youth. Our endeavours must encompass cultural, social and medical approaches. Israel is fully committed to this effort.

MASHAV, Israel's international development agency, works on training and capacity-building with partner countries that are fighting against HIV/AIDS. Recently, MASHAV hosted participants from

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Cameroon, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Kenya for a course entitled "Sexual health and AIDS prevention for adolescents". This course addressed a range of topics related to HIV in adolescents. The topics included subjects such as contraceptive use by adolescents, adolescent sexuality, interpersonal communication, gender stereotypes, sexual violence and abuse, and stigma and self-esteem.

Another example of MASHAV's programmes is its course on HIV clinical training in antiretroviral therapy for medical staff from Ethiopia. This course addresses issues pertaining to the cultural, social, psychological and medical aspects of HIV, with a focus on health professionals.

Local, national and international partnerships remain crucial. We can serve as a catalyst for positive achievements by sharing successful models and by communicating on prevention, training, capacity-building and direct care. Israel is dedicated to partnering with other countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, to mitigate and eventually eradicate HIV/AIDS. Israel is fortunate to have a low rate of HIV/AIDS, with approximately only 5,000 people living with HIV as of 2007. This is in part due to cultural trends, as well as to broad-based efforts and programmes that include education, widespread and free testing, and direct care. One such service is the Government-funded mother-and-child health clinics — known as *tipat chalav* in Hebrew — a community-based, proactive and preventive health care system that, among other services, ensures the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS is a pandemic that is devastating our youth. We must heed the words of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: "Leadership involves personal commitment and concrete actions" (*resolution 26/2, annex, para. 36*). Extensive and concrete measures taken by Governments and complemented by civil society, the private sector, academia and others can rapidly advance our efforts.

Let me conclude by expressing again the commitment of Israel to the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, and by reiterating our desire to partner with Member States to stay and eradicate HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): While we align ourselves fully with the statement of the European Union presidency, let me touch upon some issues of particular national interest to Ukraine.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his informative report (A/63/812) submitted under agenda item 41. Ukraine also welcomes the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/63/152 and Add.1) on the review of the progress made by the United Nations system organizations in achieving Millennium Development Goal 6, Target 7, to combat HIV/AIDS, which provides us with a comprehensive and clear review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes on this high-priority issue.

We are grateful to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank and the organizations and agencies of the United Nations System, including the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization and UNICEF, for their significant support and reliable partnership in overcoming the epidemic in Ukraine.

The twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly, on HIV/AIDS, and the High-level Meeting on a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS were powerful global commitments and important landmarks in the achievement of agreed consensus on key goals to be pursued over the years in combating HIV/AIDS. Ukraine was among the countries that initiated that historic special session of the General Assembly. Since then, there have been significant achievements in response to the epidemic at the global, regional and national levels.

It is my pleasure to inform the Assembly that Ukraine has made major progress towards ensuring universal access to treatment to prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child and raising awareness on HIV/AIDS prevention, especially among children and youth. We have also taken appropriate steps to increase access to drug-substitution therapy, heeding the evidence that such therapy helps to reduce HIV transmission among injecting drug users. These achievements have been reflected in the report of the Secretary-General.

Indeed, while the aforementioned progress cannot but inspire us, we recognize that many other steps have still to be taken. We in Ukraine are well aware of the

danger that HIV/AIDS represents and recognize the complexity and enormity of the tasks that lie ahead of us. The epidemic remains a challenge and thus a top priority for the activities of the President and Government of Ukraine. We are deeply concerned by the rate at which the epidemic is spreading. Aspiring to achieve tangible results in that regard, our national authorities are working tirelessly to translate international strategies and policies in this sphere into respective national programmes.

That task requires an increase in funding from the Government of Ukraine, as well as consistent support from our foreign partners. We express our sincere gratitude to the donor community and our international partners for their assistance in the preparation of our national response to the epidemic.

HIV/AIDS remains one of the gravest challenges of our time. Victory in this fight can be achieved only through intensive work all over the world. We urge the international community to strengthen its support for the most affected countries and to increase the financing of research to combat HIV/AIDS.

We believe that policies and strategies to achieve this goal should include specific, purposeful measures in such areas as prevention and universal access to treatment; care, support and access to affordable medicines for all those who are infected with the immunodeficiency virus; sharing successful experiences; developing a universal framework of national programmes on combating HIV/AIDS, including in the promotion of human rights, especially those of children and women; and cooperation with humanitarian personnel of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. We would like to stress the importance of close cooperation between the United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations, civil society and Governments in order to tackle the epidemic in an effective and comprehensive manner.

The Government of my country is eager to contribute to effective national and international cooperation in this area. Ukraine wishes to reiterate once again its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the goals set out in the global agenda on HIV/AIDS. We are ready to cooperate closely at all levels in an area of such crucial importance to humankind.

Mr. Hernández-Milian (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are at a decisive phase in the renewal of our commitments on HIV/AIDS in order to meet the great challenge of achieving the goals that we set in 2001 and, more recently, in 2006. We align ourselves with the views expressed by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and agree that, with one year to go to the deadline for achieving our goals, there is still much to be done.

The financial crisis has jeopardized the sustainability of the achievements of many countries. The link between underdevelopment and a high incidence of HIV/AIDS is a major obstacle to developing nations. There is a need for solidarity and joint action to achieve universal access to the prevention, treatment, care and support for people affected by HIV/AIDS, of which international cooperation remains an essential element.

Solidarity in this fight should not be withheld from countries that have achieved some positive indicators but still need access to international cooperation to make their achievements sustainable. That is the case with the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which should give further attention to the needs of middle-income countries. In the case of Costa Rica, important achievements have been made in such areas as access to antiretroviral therapy, the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, testing and counselling, but we still need to make additional efforts if those achievements are to be sustainable. As the Secretary-General noted in his report, the HIV/AIDS epidemic poses a long-term global challenge requiring continued commitment to ensure the sustainability of an effective long-term response.

The Global Fund's criteria used in allocating resources for assistance are based on indicators, which, in the case of middle-income countries, must show a prevalence greater than 1 per cent of the total population or 5 per cent in the case of vulnerable groups. But the Global Fund was created to foster a radical change of focus in the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and, given the socio-epidemiological characteristics of HIV/AIDS, no country should be left out of an inclusive and comprehensive response.

It is very clear that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is not only a public health problem. The need to protect human rights as part of the task is very clear. Not only must access to medical care be provided, but adequate levels of public assistance, socio-economic development

and quality of life must be guaranteed for people who live with the virus.

Discrimination, inequality and violence against women are factors that have had a significant impact on the increasing feminization of HIV/AIDS. Inadequate protection of vulnerable persons, such as sex workers, drug users, men who have sex with men, et cetera, is another one of the challenges we must face. There are also worrying levels of infection among adolescents and young adults, therefore prevention strategies need to be more focused on those populations.

Costa Rica stresses that efforts to strengthen laws and multisectoral strategies for social protection are vital to ensuring the care and welfare of those affected by the virus. Guaranteeing an equal quality of life for those affected by HIV/AIDS is also an important aspect of responding to the challenge of the pandemic.

Finally, as I said at the beginning, the fight against HIV/AIDS is a common task and a shared responsibility at all levels. The active involvement and collaboration of all sectors, including governments, social organizations, religious institutions, educational institutions and the private sector are key components within national strategies that are necessary in order to provide answers that are timely, effective and long-lasting.

Mr. Bart (Saint Kitts and Nevis): For Saint Kitts and Nevis, the issue of HIV/AIDS remains one of the most pressing challenges facing our countries. We continue to be plagued with a high HIV prevalence and its impact on the various sectors of our society is wide ranging. We have however, taken a very responsible approach in combating the scourge and remain engaged with the internationally agreed goals to deal with the pandemic. We celebrate the fact that over the past year there has been a decline in the overall rate of mortality from AIDS, that more people living with AIDS in the Caribbean have access to antiretroviral drugs, that there is an increasing awareness of the need to reduce stigma and discrimination and that more professionals are being trained in AIDS-related fields.

However, despite our best efforts, there are still circumstances beyond our control that hinder our commitment. AIDS remains the leading cause of death among persons aged 15-44 years, the rate of infection is increasing among women and among men who have sex with men, and the Caribbean has still the second highest rate of HIV prevalence in the world.

In June 2008, exactly one year ago, at its High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, the General Assembly conducted a self analysis on the epidemic and where we stood. We renewed our commitment to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 6 to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and we reaffirmed our commitment to move towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010 and to achieve the goal of halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.

Since that last meeting in 2008, the international community, as we are all aware, has been beset by a financial and economic crisis that has had a near crippling impact on every corner of the globe. The United Nations has spent the last few months focused on addressing this financial crisis, as have the Bretton Woods institutions, international and regional organizations, and States, powerful and developing, alike.

In the midst of all this, it is necessary to maintain the same level of commitment that we exhibited one year ago to combating HIV/AIDS. Two days ago, on 15 June 2009, the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, held a forum on advancing global health in the face of the crisis. During that forum, Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, suggested that the international community needs to maintain the momentum we had in advancing global health. Saint Kitts and Nevis endorses that suggestion.

My delegation believes firmly that, at this stage of the fight against HIV/AIDS, we must not lose focus or lessen our intensity. On the contrary, the international community must remain engaged and push forward with fulfilling its mandate to combat the disease.

Saint Kitts and Nevis commends the Secretary-General and the Director-General for the forum and commends the United Nations for convening this meeting today. I also wish to take this opportunity to commend the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS for its continued leadership, especially in the movement toward universal access and generally for its guidance and direction, which has sustained global partnerships around agreed principles. It is our hope that those activities signal the final push to our

desired goals for 2010 and an increased commitment to achieving MDG 6 by 2015.

Within this financial crisis, Saint Kitts and Nevis calls on Member States to renew their commitment to official development aid. Without those funds and financing, all of the progress we have made in educating the public, treating the sick, providing infrastructure to treat the sick, developing relevant drugs and providing the appropriate local legislation, may be lost. We must not waver in our commitments to universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes, treatment, care and support. We must remain convinced now that overcoming the challenges of AIDS is an absolute imperative that must consume our every effort.

The report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the review of the progress made by the United Nations system organizations in achieving Millennium Development Goal 6, Target 7, to combat HIV/AIDS (A/63/152/Add.1), underscores the fact that the number of people living with the illness has grown. As a result of that increase, there is also a need for additional resources to deal with those changes. Despite the economic and financial crisis, we must not fail those we have been tasked to care for and to protect.

Saint Kitts and Nevis also endorses the role of the Department of Public Information in creating public awareness and we are committed to a harmonized international partnership with all of the stakeholders. We urge Member States to reaffirm their commitments for both 2010 and 2015, and to remain engaged in the process of combating HIV/AIDS because political leadership is critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of programmes to achieve universal access and to reverse the spread of this epidemic.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/63/812, entitled "Progress made in the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS".

It is my honour today to address the Assembly on the very important topic of the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, to express the support of my country for the global efforts that have been made and to briefly inform the Assembly of the progress made in my country in combating HIV/AIDS.

Bosnia and Herzegovina aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, delivered by the representative of the Czech Republic. We welcome the significant and incomparable progress achieved in combating AIDS, with the United Nations as a leading force and hub of joint action. We also congratulate all actors who have contributed to the common effort and we believe that the results achieved would not be possible without cooperation and trust between national Governments and civil society.

The fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic remains one of the greatest priorities of global society, which is why Governments and civil society must combine their efforts to strengthen health systems worldwide. As we are all aware, HIV infection poses a threat to human security and that is why early detection is imperative. Testing and antiretroviral treatment should be free and accessible to all. Also, health education should be provided by trained and qualified personnel.

Concern remains, however, in regard to the ongoing and even increasing problems facing the world today. In addition to all of the difficulties of previous years, the current financial and economic crisis places an additional burden on international efforts and efforts by national Governments and their country-specific targets.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is among those countries with low HIV/AIDS prevalence. The first AIDS case in Bosnia and Herzegovina was registered in 1986, and the first HIV-positive person was identified in 1989. Out of the total number of people with the disease, 90 per cent are male, the majority of whom are intravenous drug users; and so far there have been no reports of vertical mother-to-child transmission.

Due to the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina falls within the category of low-level epidemic countries, there is an opportunity to establish monitoring and control over this difficult and lethal infection. The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the technical cooperation of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), established the Bosnia and Herzegovina National Advisory Board for the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Also, in recent times, the non-governmental sector has undertaken major activities in implementing awareness campaigns and establishing cooperation between domestic and international non-governmental

organizations. Bosnia and Herzegovina also attaches the utmost importance to regional cooperation, and is supported by a number of international actors including UNAIDS, the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Labour Organization, and others. I wish to note that the third Balkan Regional Conference on HIV and AIDS, under the theme "HIV and gender: Creating an enabling environment", took place in my country last year.

Let me conclude by assuring the Assembly that Bosnia and Herzegovina is fully committed to the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, and to achieving the goals and targets set out in the Declarations.

We share the belief in that common success will result from achieving those commitments and from actions to support universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and support by 2010, and to attain the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Common success will be achieved through well-defined and implemented national strategies, increased financial support to efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, improved legislation worldwide and full commitment by all of the major stakeholders.

Mrs. Flood-Beaubrun (Saint Lucia): Saint Lucia welcomes this forum, convened to examine progress made in the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. Events such as this not only allow us to share and learn from the experiences of others, but also fuel our drive to redouble our efforts in fighting this terrible epidemic.

Saint Lucia is located in the Caribbean region, where prevalence rates are second only to those of sub-Saharan Africa. Saint Lucia's epidemic is significant, although not yet classified as generalized, as prevalence in the general population is not above 1 per cent. While Saint Lucia is a middle-income country, any increase in poverty will increase social and economic vulnerabilities, thus providing the environment for a growth in the epidemic. Given our limited financial resources, we remain acutely aware that our very survival depends on winning this battle. In this regard, we are committed to employing best practices that have been proven to work in our context.

As a people, we take great pride in our small island State and its vibrant traditions, culture, beliefs and practices. We believe that this cultural capital is a crucial element in the fight against HIV/AIDS and in our case has been instrumental in maintaining the relatively slow advance of the epidemic in our country. Our primary concern today is that Saint Lucia's now concentrated epidemic will cross over into the general population. We see several key actions as being crucial to preventing that crossover, which form the basis of our HIV/AIDS response and which we are now pleased to share with fellow Member States.

In keeping with a five-year strategic plan, Saint Lucia's efforts have been primarily concentrated on, first, encouraging delay in sexual debut; secondly, discouraging multiple concurrent sexual partnerships; thirdly, promoting the use of condoms — with the first two mentioned being the primary pillars upon which our response is based. We have also implemented a successful mother-to-child prevention of transmission treatment programme that provides treatment for HIV-positive expectant mothers.

We note the observation of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS that multiple concurrent partnerships are the primary driver of HIV/AIDS in the most affected countries. We intend to continue to support, through media and educational programmes in schools and in the wider community, the existing cultural value of committed loving relationships as an ideal, emphasizing our experience that casual sexual relations not only increase one's risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, but also tend towards the objectification of the human person. We will continue to work in close collaboration with youth leaders and with community and faith-based groups to give priority to encouraging delayed sexual debut among young people and mutual fidelity within a permanent commitment for older age groups. Peer education will be a major vehicle for these prevention-focused messages.

Those efforts will be coupled with education on HIV/AIDS in order to reduce stigma and encourage testing so that individuals can know their status and seek treatment. We believe that supporting people and their families and communities in promoting an accurate understanding of HIV/AIDS and healthy choices is one of the most important roles the Government of Saint Lucia can play. Furthermore, this approach actively engages the culture of Saint Lucia in

the process, which is critical for any programme's acceptance by the population and long-term success.

Another key action is to develop targeted solutions to the specific epidemic that exists in Saint Lucia. Although precise figures are not yet available for sex workers or for men who have sex with men, those groups are currently known to be at risk in the region. Significantly higher rates of HIV have been found in those population groups in other Caribbean countries with similar profiles. Fundamental to the person-centred approach is to avoid dealing with persons in those groups as potential vectors of disease and to address their acute needs.

The use of sexual services is a main risk factor for the spread of HIV/AIDS in the general population. Consistent with the person-centred approach, Saint Lucia seeks to answer the question of what this person needs to protect their health and achieve their human potential. It is our experience that the label "sex worker" limits our ability to see the whole person, who, in a majority of cases, has been trafficked, manipulated and sexually, physically and emotionally abused and is at risk for much more than HIV/AIDS. We feel that the current international response to legalize sex work and promote risk-reduction through condom distribution are inadequate and prioritize safer-sex over the well-being of the person.

Policies and programmes that target demand for sex workers are a key starting point. Such policies include criminalizing the purchase of sex, counselling for clients and pimps and severe penalties for sex traffickers and for third parties who use technology to facilitate the purchase of sex. We also intend to offer specialized treatment, care and support programmes for women, men and children used in the sex trade that address their unique needs. Those programmes will include a major educational component that will focus on the acquisition of job skills and opportunities to break the cycle of sexual exploitation, which is so difficult to escape.

In the case of the population of men who have sex with men, interventions must begin with the alleviation of the stigma and with the expansion of routine testing and counselling programmes. As a critical feature, intervention must offer social support and linkages to care and counselling related to partner disclosure and the health benefits of reduced partner concurrency. The health benefits of committed relationships, beyond the reduced risk for HIV/AIDS, must be emphasized in the context of the promotion of overall physical, emotional and sexual health.

We encourage all Member States, in particular those dealing with a concentrated epidemic, to join Saint Lucia in confronting, in a steadfast manner, the underlying societal forces that tend to promote poverty, malnutrition, susceptibility to chronic illness, conflict, unemployment, illiteracy, sexual exploitation, the sexual objectification of the person, drug abuse and every manifestation of disregard for human dignity.

At the centre of Saint Lucia's response to HIV/AIDS is the human person, in particular those at risk for, and affected by, the disease. We must constantly ask ourselves what the needs of persons at risk are and what steps can be taken to promote their integral human development and overall well-being.

It is the conviction of Saint Lucia that success in combating HIV/AIDS can only come from the solidarity of all actors in society in addressing the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of all persons in society, thus creating the necessary conditions for overall health and well-being and for human flourishing. Saint Lucia is pleased to reaffirm its commitment to the goal of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group.

Nicaragua joins this debate with the same concerns that many delegations have expressed today, at a time when a global economic and financial crisis is both jeopardizing the fight against AIDS and having an impact on the achievement of other goals, such as ensuring the right to development and gender equality and the empowerment of women, reducing child mortality and promoting maternal health. The social injustice and poverty unleashed by the neo-liberal economic model have sped up the expansion of this and many other illnesses. This situation, which is being exacerbated by the current global economic and financial crisis, poses a threat to the scarce resources available for fostering international cooperation to respond to the epidemic in our countries. We therefore once again call upon developed countries to honour their commitments with regard to official development assistance, so as to help our countries to implement

national plans and strategies, without preconditions that constrain our priorities.

The close linkage between sustainable development, health and education has been clearly established. It is therefore necessary that we adopt a multidisciplinary, multisectoral and inter-cultural approach that includes a gender- and human rights-based focus. In that regard, we have initiated a transformation process in Nicaragua by implementing our new care model for family and community health. That model is primarily centred on rural care, with such key stakeholders as community workers, health-care personnel and for-profit and not-for-profit institutions joining together in a single effort to ensure the genuine integration of care. That has resulted in increasing the involvement of stakeholders, with a view to ensuring that antiretroviral treatment is followed. It has also led to a significant reduction in the risk of infection among certain groups, the provision of comprehensive treatment for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, including access to antiretroviral treatment, and the application of second-generation monitoring methodology. All of that is in addition to efforts to control tuberculosis, in connection with which the indicators have clearly improved.

With regard to the national institution charged with managing the national AIDS response, a monitoring and evaluation plan was adopted in 2009 to ensure the implementation of the Three Ones. Those include an action framework on HIV/AIDS for the period 2006 to 2010, a coordinating authority and the 2009 monitoring and evaluation system.

Efforts across various sectors have formed a crucial approach to increasing, expanding and implementing crosscutting responses to HIV/AIDS. To that end, the Ministry of Health has undertaken an operational transformation of the HIV/AIDS programme, which it has itself led. That process includes the holding of workshops, the development of governance mechanisms, beginning the process of reforming our Law No. 238, in consultation with civil society and Government institutions, and promoting participation at the various levels where decisions are taken with regard to national policies and strategies concerning the diverse sexual groups in our country.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Another of our priorities has been to establish strategic alliances with international sources of assistance. The Government acknowledges the capacity of the public and private sectors, non-profit and voluntary organizations, local government authorities and communities and households to respond to HIV/AIDS. The Government is therefore endeavouring to seek harmonization and cooperation among nations and has received the support of friendly Governments, such as Brazil, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Cuba and Mexico, as well as international agencies, such as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United States Agency for International Development, the Pan American Health Organization, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund.

With regards to access to diagnosis and care for the population in general, and people with HIV/AIDS in particular, there has been improvement in access to rapid HIV/AIDS diagnosis. In 2003, we had only one diagnostic centre, the National Centre for Diagnosis and Reference. By the end of 2008, we had 143 diagnostic centres, equipped with the appropriate laboratory and skilled staff to carry out rapid diagnoses of HIV throughout Nicaragua.

All health clinics can now provide advice on HIV prevention, and we had 115,671 consultations of that kind in 2008. We have improved comprehensive care for people with HIV/AIDS. We have guaranteed and decentralized antiretroviral treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS. We have gone from 335 people living with AIDS in 2006 to 790 in 2009. Currently, 90 per cent of local comprehensive health care departments have the capacity and resources for care. We have also made progress in strengthening standards for care in health clinics by drawing up standards and protocols for the care, nutrition and psychosocial care of pregnant women in order to prevent mother-to-child transmission and care for children, adolescents and adults living with HIV.

Our Government will continue to make efforts to combat this epidemic, in which factors such as education and solidarity are vital to continuing to make progress in measures and policies that will enable us to win the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Gebreel (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to align my statement with the

statement made by the representative of Swaziland on behalf of the African Group.

AIDS has been given great international attention, but this interest should be translated into practical steps to implement what has been agreed in international conferences and decisions on this subject, the most important of which is Millennium Development Goal 6 and resolution 60/262.

There has been some progress in combating this disease, and statistics show a relatively low rate of infection. The number of people infected continues to rise, however, as noted in paragraph 26 of the Secretary-General's report, especially in poor countries and most particularly in the African continent. The rate of the spread of the disease in the African continent is increasing as a result of the current financial crisis.

International donors must therefore redouble their efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and increase annual funding in order to increase the level of resources dedicated to combating this disease, to enable poor and low-income countries to face this challenge and to establish research centres in these countries and funding for international research centres aimed at disseminating preventive measures and inexpensive drugs to combat this disease.

Efforts to deal with this disease must be carried out on two parallel tracks. First, we must concentrate on prevention by supporting national strategies, awareness campaigns and the participation of international organizations. Secondly, we must focus on providing the necessary care and treatment for those infected.

In this connection, we must mention the issue of the human rights of those infected by this disease. This includes providing health care and compassion for them and not isolating them, except in cases that constitute a danger for others in society. The fear of this disease should not be turned against those who are infected with it. The infected have rights as well as certain responsibilities vis-à-vis themselves and their societies, and we have to educate them about these duties and responsibilities. They must receive information from specialists on why the disease is infectious, how people are infected and how it is transmitted, and they must inform all of those who deal with them, such as spouses, that they also could be infected.

Finally, we must be very cautious in laying out the terms of our non-discrimination policies, and not confuse that with the preventive measures that have to be taken by countries to prevent the spread of this disease. We must also take into account the social, cultural and religious particularities of different societies in order to prevent the disease from spreading in these societies.

Mr. Al Oyaidi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express our gratitude for the holding of this important meeting to discuss the report of the Secretary-General concerning the progress in the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment of 2001 on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS of 2006.

The Kingdom has had a national programme to combat AIDS since 1986, including a comprehensive plan to prevent the spread of this disease among citizens and residents of the Kingdom. My country has also provided support and all necessary requirements for this programme, such as providing laboratories with the necessary resources for diagnosing the HIV virus. We have also provided support for the continuation of a health survey, so that the programme can carry out its responsibilities in preventing the spread of this disease in the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has set up a national approach to the issue through the funding of various programmes. In this context, we have supported efforts to prevent AIDS and have contributed to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, increasing our contribution from the Saudi resource fund from $10 million to $18 million between 2008 to 2010.

My country believes that, in order to promote prevention and this programme, we must work efficiently to develop national capacities in developing and low-income countries in order to support their national programmes for the prevention of this disease.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002, I now call on the observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Ms. Pradhan Malla (Inter-Parliamentary Union): I speak on behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Let me begin by saying that one of our principal aims as parliamentarians is to push for more forthright parliamentary leadership in dealing with the epidemic.

How is this to be done? Often, for us in parliament, it means taking a courageous stand before an electorate that may have mixed views on ways to tackle the virus and its allied complexities. As leading spokespersons in our societies, we parliamentarians have to stand up and speak out for groups that are most disadvantaged as a result of prejudice, discrimination and ignorance. We have to broadcast a message of tolerance and understanding, using the force of example at home in our own constituencies.

We are all aware that people living with HIV have rights that need protecting. In that connection, we are concerned by the increasing tendency among legislatures to criminalize the transmission of the HIV virus in certain circumstances. In the IPU, we have made it clear that, before rushing to legislate, we should give careful consideration to the fact that enacting HIV-specific criminal legislation can further stigmatize people living with HIV. It can provide a disincentive to HIV testing, create a false sense of security among people who are HIV-negative and, rather than assisting women by protecting them against HIV infection, impose on them an additional burden and risk of violence or discrimination.

In addition, there is no evidence that criminal laws specific to HIV transmission will have any significant impact on the spread of HIV or on halting the epidemic. Priority must be given to increasing access to comprehensive and evidence-informed prevention methods in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

We also have to remedy the shortcomings in legislators' knowledge of other issues connected with HIV and AIDS. For example, if we want to work for universal access to antiretroviral therapy, we need to know and understand the problems connected with pricing, trade laws and distribution. We need to know why the drugs are not reaching the people who need them. And where this means legislating and amending old laws, we should be ready to do so. We want more information to be provided to parliaments on the multilateral intellectual property regime. Fuller knowledge of intellectual property rights can lead to lives being saved.

We are currently giving practical effect to this, working at the regional level. Earlier this year, the IPU joined with the National Assembly of South Africa in setting up a regional training seminar for members of parliament on drug accessibility and affordability. As the seminar revealed, the question is more intricate than the technicalities of the flexibilities of the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights identified by the World Trade Organization, complex though they are. Even when drugs are affordable, there are difficulties relating to storage and distribution and, further down the line, in ensuring compliance with prescription regimes and making sure that the medicines are used for the proper purpose. Parliaments need to do more to study these issues, and we recommend that they set up cross-party committees as the central points in their institutions for that purpose. These committees should work closely with civil society and people living with HIV.

Another area where the IPU is taking action concerns HIV-related travel restrictions. After participating in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS task force on the subject, the IPU and its governing bodies have adopted its recommendations, opening the way for us to push for legislative reform to bring this discrimination to an end.

The IPU also works to mobilize parliamentary involvement in major international HIV and AIDS events. It gathered over 100 members of parliament and staff in a parliamentary briefing organized on the occasion of the 2008 International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, and it will be working in conjunction with the Austrian Parliament to ensure that legislators make their presence felt in Vienna next year. We welcome the increased political dimension of the international conferences.

At the risk of stating the obvious, let me say that the issue of HIV and AIDS is an eminently political question. In that respect, while welcoming the Secretary-General's report (A/63/812) under this agenda item, let me say that I fail to understand why, once again, it makes no reference whatsoever to the work done by parliaments.

The achievements in parliamentary activism on HIV and AIDS would not be possible without a true partnership, and the IPU is grateful to its United Nations partners for their engagement and support. The IPU is committed to maintaining the momentum and will do its best to help members of parliament create an enabling legal environment to respond to HIV and AIDS.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 47/4 of 16 October 1992, I now call on the

observer of the International Organization for Migration.

Ms. Strauss (International Organization for Migration): The International Organization for Migration (IOM) appreciates the opportunity to participate in today's debate and to share its views on issues related to the health of migrants and the global HIV response.

While progress has been made in many areas since the adoption of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, many challenges remain, including regarding the linkages between migration and derived health outcomes, on which I would like to focus my brief intervention.

At the outset, it is important to clarify that migration in and of itself does not equal increased HIV risk. The migration process can impact health outcomes negatively or positively. Migration is complex, and there are many different types of mobile populations.

The President took the Chair.

HIV prevention, care, treatment and support programmes must take into account the particular vulnerabilities of migrants and mobile populations at each stage of the migration process. Conditions surrounding that process can increase health vulnerabilities, particularly for those migrants who migrate involuntarily or clandestinely, or who fall into the hands of traffickers. Disparities between a migrant's place of origin and destination often exist, particularly with respect to health determinants. The conditions and circumstances that drive mobility — such as poverty, violence and inequalities — may also impact migrants' vulnerabilities to and risks of HIV infection, as well as their ability to access related services. Migrants may have limited access to HIV-related services because they do not have the right to access them or are unaware of them, or because existing services are not migrant-friendly.

More information is needed on HIV and mobile populations. Migration is complex because it is a process, not a single event, and because it may include internal and international migrants alike. Depending on the policies of States, documented migrants may be categorized in a variety of different ways. Those migrants who lack documents, enter in a clandestine manner or change migration status while they are in the country are often not included in official statistics. Efforts to assist health systems to better capture data on the health of migrants and their use of services in a rights-based manner are urgently needed.

HIV and population mobility responses require multisectoral cooperation within and among countries. Within countries, it is crucial to have an open and constructive multisectoral dialogue based on shared and fundamental societal values and principles, such as solidarity, integration, human rights and participation, as well as sound public health principles. Beyond national borders, it is equally important to ensure multisectoral regional consultative processes, bringing together migration, health and labour sectors.

Let me conclude by saying that IOM looks forward to continuing to work with Member States, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and many other partners on issues related to HIV and migration, and more broadly on migration and health issues for the well-being of migrants and host communities alike. Addressing the HIV prevention and care needs of migrants improves migrants' health, avoids long-term health and social costs, protects global public health, facilitates integration, and ultimately contributes to the stabilization of societies and their social and economic development.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. I would like to inform members that action on draft decision A/63/L.73 is deferred to a later date.

The Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 41.

Agenda items 7 and 101 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

Draft resolution (A/63/L.72)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 101 at its 25th plenary meeting, on 13 October 2008. In order to enable the General Assembly to consider draft resolution A/63/L.72, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 101. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 101?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 101?

I see no objection. We shall now proceed accordingly.

In connection with this item, the General Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/63/L.72.

I give the floor to the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.72.

Mr. Puri (India): I have the honour, on behalf of the facilitators, Sweden and India, and the other sponsors, to introduce a draft resolution on the Peacebuilding Fund, as contained in document A/63/L.72.

Since the draft resolution was submitted, the following countries have become sponsors: Belgium, Benin, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The draft resolution before the Assembly is the outcome of a long process that began with an informal effort to identify the essence of the views of interested Member States on the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund and its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission. Those discussions built upon a mandated assessment of the Fund through an independent evaluation, the response of the management to that evaluation and a useful assessment of the Fund by the Advisory Group of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office.

The views expressed by Member States on that basis were then distilled into a non-paper, which was to serve as an input for the draft report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund and its terms of reference. The subsequent report of the Secretary-General (A/63/818) then put forward a revised set of terms of reference for the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund. That became the point of departure for the draft resolution that we are to adopt today.

Since we have worked with the Secretariat not only to revise the terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund, but also to bring those revised items to the implementation stage on the basis of the informal consultations, it is only fitting that I extend, on behalf of Sweden and India, our sincere appreciation to all delegations for the constructive spirit in which the consultations took place.

The purpose of that entire exercise was to ensure that the revision of the terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund would help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Fund. The intention is that the Fund should be able to expeditiously provide short-term emergency funding to create quick wins in the early stage of peace consolidation. Equally, it should be able to provide catalytic funding to help address the causes of conflict over the medium term.

The revised terms of reference, along with continuing efforts to improve the management structures of the Fund, will contribute towards that end. The spirit of the revised terms of reference is as important as the text. It is important, therefore, to recall that the revision of the terms of reference was guided by two broad objectives.

The first was to enhance the Fund's capacity to serve as a flexible, responsive and focused resource for peacebuilding support, including through rationalizing and simplifying its structure and architecture.

The second objective was to enhance and maximize the synergy between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund through provisions for enhanced transparency and consultation. The relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission and all donors needs to be managed creatively, so as to utilize the synergies in the existing peacebuilding strategies.

The terms of reference would be implemented through updated policies and guidelines that would address management and administrative issues. The United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office should develop those guidelines in a guidance document in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme as the Fund's administrative agent, as well as with other relevant United Nations organizations and the Advisory Group. Management processes should be transparent to ensure continued support from Member States and other stakeholders.

The Secretary-General will submit an annual report to the General Assembly on the operation and

activities of the Fund. At the sixty-sixth session, that report will include the findings and recommendations of the next comprehensive independent evaluation.

Similarly, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office will also organize regular briefings on the Fund's performance with Member States. An annual meeting is aimed at providing all stakeholders with the opportunity for a thorough review of the Fund's performance, results and emerging lessons. The annual event will also provide an opportunity to regularly replenish the Fund. We look forward to such regular interactions as a means to ensure transparency and the participation of Member States in the peacebuilding process.

On behalf of the facilitators and the sponsors, I sincerely hope that the procedural draft resolution, contained in document A/63/L.72, can be adopted by consensus. We are grateful for the support of all delegations in that regard.

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/63/L.72, entitled "The Peacebuilding Fund". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.72?

Draft resolution A/63/L.72 was adopted (resolution 63/282).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 101?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.91

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

91st plenary meeting
Monday, 29 June 2009, 12.10 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 12.10 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 20 at its 43rd plenary meeting, on 10 November 2008.

In order to enable the General Assembly to consider this item upon the request of several Member States, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 20. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

The President: It is with a heavy heart and deep personal outrage that I open this plenary meeting to consider the coup d'état that interrupted the democratic and constitutional rule of President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales in the Republic of Honduras yesterday, 28 June.

In response to urgent requests from many Member States, it is my responsibility and duty to bring this outrageous attack on Honduran democracy to the attention of the General Assembly so that we might consider ways to ensure the peaceful restoration of the legitimate Government of President Zelaya in the hours and days ahead.

As a Nicaraguan, I am ashamed that this coup has taken place in Central America during my presidency of the General Assembly. It is a throwback to another era that we had hoped was now a distant nightmare. Latin America and the Caribbean have the ignominious record of being the region with the greatest number of military coups in the world. That is a record that has no place in the twenty-first century.

The first so-called anti-communist coup was against the democratically elected Government of President Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán in 1954 in neighbouring Guatemala. In the 1970s and 1980s, virtually every country on the continent was humiliated, subjugated, violated and brutalized by military regimes that usurped power for the sake of promoting the interests of the United States of America and its local caretakers, who always claimed to be motivated by the need to defend their own peculiar understanding of democracy and freedom.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Those were bloody, oppressive years when the best of our workers and *campesinos*, students, artists and politicians were abducted, imprisoned and assassinated or forced into exile. Those were lost decades in the development of our region, and only in recent years have we managed to recover democratic rule throughout the region. But our societies are permanently scarred by the atrocities committed to make them safe for corporate profits and unfettered markets.

On Sunday morning — that is to say, yesterday — at 4 a.m. Honduran time, masked men with automatic weapons invaded the residence of President Zelaya and swept him away to exile in Costa Rica. This represents the first coup in the region since the end of the cold war. It is not the first attempt, however. Reactionary forces, which have never given a hoot for the growing number of our dispossessed, are now alarmed by the remarkably powerful movements that have brought progressive Governments to power in response to the disastrous consequences brought about by anti-people neoliberal policies.

Let us remember the failed coup d'état against the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in 2002 and the continuing destabilization that seeks to disrupt the first presidency of a representative of the indigenous people of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. We must make certain that this act of infamy in Honduras also ends in absolute failure.

The region has responded with outrage and with demands for the immediate restoration of the legitimate Government. The Organization of American States has issued a very responsible and good declaration, and the Rio Group, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas and the Central American Integration System have all decried the military action in Honduras. Leaders around the world have denounced the military action.

Now it is appropriate and crucial that the entire world community, the group of 192 members of the General Assembly, add its voice to underscore the universal rejection of this crime. Let us denounce the perpetrators with such unanimity that no military-backed regime in Honduras will be able to withstand the criticism and rejection of the world.

Today, we are concluding the historic United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, which began on 24 June. Many Member States have expressed their concern about the social unrest and political instability that have resulted from the ongoing economic calamity that is raining down on virtually every country around the world. This only exacerbates the unrest created by the criminal military coup in Honduras, which we hope will be very short-lived.

Certainly, the call for a constitutional amendment to extend presidential term limits is in no way illegitimate. Over the past 15 years, several Latin American countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, have held plebiscites on such proposals, and new legislation has often been adopted without incident.

The forces behind this crime must be exposed and brought to justice. More important, we must not let them take advantage of the economic turmoil in order to return to business as usual. We must allow the peoples of the world to choose their Governments for themselves and listen to their voices, which call for justice and participation in their societies and their economies. Let us not allow those voices to be extinguished, as all of us would then be diminished and our future dimmed.

I declare my total and unconditional solidarity with President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, the only legitimate, democratically elected and constitutional head of State of the Republic of Honduras. Long live the people of Honduras!

I also wish to inform members that, as President of the General Assembly, I have sent a letter to President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales of Honduras inviting him to come to the United Nations to address the General Assembly as soon as possible to give us an updated report on events in his country.

Mr. Reina Idiaquez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am here at a tragic moment in the history of Honduras, but we are certain that this is a time of transition from which the country's democratic order will emerge strengthened. I am also here to represent the legitimate President of the Republic of Honduras, Mr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales. It is a shame that coups d'état are still taking place. We had hoped that they were things of the past, but forces that stand in opposition to peoples and democracy are rising up once again.

This is a statement that, like any other representative in the Hall, I would have preferred not to have to deliver. It is not pleasant to have to condemn an attack against a regime that has been constitutionally and democratically established in full respect for the law and with the supreme mandate of the people of Honduras to manage the country's future — a Government transparently chosen in completely free elections that were observed by the entire international community.

I wish to talk about democracy — about what it is, how it is nourished, who it benefits and why it is so crucial to our lives and the lives of our peoples today. Democracy certainly means the participation of citizens in the election of the leaders who will manage their future while fully adhering to the law and respect for minorities and majorities alike and without discrimination of any sort. Above all, it means universal participation in a Government that serves the people who elect it on the basis of equality through a direct secret vote. That can only serve to benefit a people. It is no exaggeration to say that civilization as we know it today would not exist without democracy. The lack of democracy therefore has very dire consequences that have an impact on the human development of the planet.

Today, my country has lost its democratic system of governance as a result of a coup d'état against its legitimate President, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, who was sent to another country in the middle of the night. While his human rights were being violated, some of his close colleagues were detained and a state of affairs was in effect decreed that divided one part of the population against the other, including soldiers and families, and impeded the exercise of the rights of all Hondurans. The notion of consulting the people in a non-binding referendum — to take place on a Sunday in June, in order to determine whether they agreed to a change in the general elections scheduled for November and whether a constituent national assembly was to be established to ascertain whether or not the Honduran people wanted to improve the structure of the Constitution — was sufficient reason for extremely conservative forces to break with the constitutional order in Honduras.

The call for that referendum to seek the opinion of the Honduran people in no way violated either the Constitution or the law. In no way did it deviate from the President's powers or from the Constitution of Honduras, which all of us have pledged to respect and which gives the President the power to call for plebiscites, referendums and any other undertaking that seeks to determine the people's will. The President wanted to strengthen Honduran democracy — which the people call for so fervently, which cost us so dearly and which we so desperately need.

In early 2009, President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales sent a congratulatory letter to President-elect Barack Obama of the United States of America. In it he said that his historic victory reaffirmed that the sacred values of democratic tolerance were the best tools to combat social exclusion and discrimination in a free society that respected civil rights. The President also stated that all of us were experiencing a global crisis that touched on various aspects of economic and social life, political democracy, climate change, insecurity and terrorism, among others. His thesis, then as now, was that there is an urgent need for all of us to devote ourselves to designing a new global democratic architecture to benefit the vast majority of the dispossessed.

We hold out the hope that — as the European Union, the Rio Group, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, the Central American Integration System and the brotherly peoples and Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Spain, the United States of America and Uruguay have done — the General Assembly will today comprehensively condemn the coup d'état in Honduras and call for the country's President to be restored to his legitimate functions, for the human rights of all to be respected and for no Government constituted as a result of the coup to be recognized.

We express our great appreciation to the brotherly countries of Latin America for their unconditional support. In particular, we thank Costa Rica for its hospitality in hosting President Zelaya in these very difficult times. We are also especially grateful to the Government of Nicaragua, which along with Costa Rica has invited the President to take part in the meeting of presidents currently taking place in Managua. It is now for the General Assembly, which has always proclaimed democracy and the equality of nations, to pronounce itself. It also has a historic opportunity to show that it is capable of putting into practice the purposes and principles for which it was established.

We are also grateful to the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, who have clearly and precisely issued three fundamental appeals. The first is to save the life of the President and his family and to uphold the rights of all Hondurans. Secondly, they have called for the return of the President of the Republic to the full exercise of the presidency to which he was elected. Thirdly, they have called for the rejection of any illegitimate Government that usurps the place of the President of the Republic under any pretext. To that end, Honduras will be eternally grateful to all the nations of the world.

May God bless the United Nations, the world and Honduras at this historic moment.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on this occasion on behalf of the States members of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA). The members of this new organization of solidarity and transformation, are the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The text of the statement I am about to read out was approved yesterday by the Permanent Representatives of the ALBA members in the United Nations, in consultation with their highest national authorities. It therefore reflects the views of the heads of State on the issue at hand today. This statement reads as follows:

> "[The] States members of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) represented in the United Nations:
>
> "Reject and condemn the coup d'état against José Manuel Zelaya, Constitutional President of the Republic of Honduras, staged by the Honduran armed forces with the connivance of the oligarchy and the reactionary forces of that country;
>
> "Call for an immediate return to the rule of law in the Republic of Honduras and the reinstatement of Manuel Zelaya, the legitimate Constitutional President of that country;
>
> "Declare that our Governments do not and will not recognize any Government other than the democratically elected Government of President Manuel Zelaya;
>
> "Urge the international community not to recognize any Government other than the legitimate Government of President Manuel Zelaya;
>
> "Call upon the Honduran armed forces to return immediately to their barracks in order to avoid incidents that could lead to bloodshed;
>
> "Appeal to democratic elements within the armed forces to support President Manuel Zelaya and his people;
>
> "Demand that the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Patricia Rodas, who was kidnapped by the Honduran armed forces, be released immediately and that her life and dignity be respected;
>
> "Condemn the kidnapping and maltreatment by the Honduran armed forces of the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Venezuelan Ambassadors, which is in violation of international law;
>
> "Demand that the lives and dignity of President Zelaya's family and all members of the Honduran Government be fully respected;
>
> "Request that His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the United Nations General Assembly, immediately convene a meeting of the General Assembly to consider this breakdown in the constitutional order of the Republic of Honduras;
>
> "Express our solidarity with the democratic, public-spirited demonstrations staged by the Honduran people who are calling for the reinstatement of President Manuel Zelaya and fighting for the democratic principles that have been violated; and
>
> "Declare our unconditional solidarity with President José Manuel Zelaya."

This statement was signed in New York by all Permanent Representatives of the aforementioned countries yesterday afternoon, 28 June 2009.

With the assent of the President of the General Assembly, I would now like to make some remarks on behalf of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to express most emphatically and categorically our support for the Government of President Zelaya, demand that the Government that

took power through the coup step down, call for the Government imposed by force not to be recognized, and unconditionally demand the immediate return of President Zelaya to the functions to which he was elected by popular vote.

On behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, we wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for calling this meeting and echoing the world's voice on this matter. We also congratulate him on his firm and courageous positions in defence of democracy, the right of peoples to elect their own Government, and, in general, his support for the process of change unfolding on our continent. That process of change is at work in Honduras, and that is why the cause of Honduras has brought us together today in the General Assembly.

The era of popular power is dawning in the Americas. A new world is taking shape that will break the mould of the democracy of elites, the old democracy of corrupt financial, economic and political leaders who oppress the peoples in order to serve transnational interests — in other words, neoliberal dictatorships that deny human rights. Here and there, new and pluralistic forms of participatory democracies are playing a leading role in that process, and, as members are aware, the coup d'état in Honduras is not going to stop it. That is why the countries of the world must support the restoration of democracy and help to defeat this new attempt to turn back the tide of history.

In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, through torture, tens of thousands of abductions, murders and acts of State terrorism to overthrow or assassinate presidents such as Salvador Allende and Juan José Torres, hope was crushed but not destroyed. Hope is being reborn everywhere, and Honduras has become a focal point for deciding the present and future of democracy, and not only in the Americas. That is why we cannot allow Honduras to fall into the filthy hands of reactionary, pro-coup military leaders and oligarchs.

The same dark forces are once again calling for violence and planning assassinations and coups d'état — in Venezuela not long ago and more recently in Bolivia, Ecuador and in Honduras today — and are seeking to destroy this awakening, birth and rebirth of the people's struggles, but they will not be able to prevent the forward march of democratic and revolutionary on our continent. They will not prevail; they will not return.

A spark has ignited and is gradually spreading, becoming the spirit of peace. It is moving forward like an annunciation — a message on behalf of the Earth, the seas, the rivers, human beings and all life, saying no to death and yes to the hope that, together, the people and the Earth, humankind and nature, will liberate themselves. Tyrants, reactionary armies, those who have sold their souls to the devil will not prevail. To the contrary, indigenous peoples, workers, patriotic soldiers, women, intellectuals, young people — all those who once had no voice — are now crying out with the force of the winds and sowing the seeds of liberty throughout the world.

It is no accident that President Zelaya was overthrown, because he wanted to consult with his people in order to open the way for popular participation and a new democracy infused with the people's spirit and social justice. That is what oligarchies fear; they are prepared to break any law and to commit any kind of crime to stop the processes of inspiration and change. They believe it is possible to do so, and they have tried in thousands of ways. That is why they are conspiring in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and many other countries on our continent, and it is why they pursue the campaign against the heroic Republic of Cuba. It is an international conspiracy against the forces of change.

We do not accept and will not accept the coup d'état against President Zelaya. We will not accept any other President. We are certain that a people-inspired democracy, a participatory and leading democracy, has taken root in Honduras and that this new kind of democracy will emerge strengthened from this process. We hope that the generals and civilian oligarchs will not fire on the Honduran people. They could have quite a surprise if they do. They cannot count on the impunity enjoyed by other dictatorships enjoyed in former times. The times have changed; they are times of change, times of renewal, times of transformation, even times of revolution.

We express our firm solidarity with the popular demonstrations for democracy, dignity and the return of President José Manuel Zelaya taking place in Honduras. The Honduran people are not and will not be alone at this crucial hour of history.

We welcome the support that many international organizations of various kinds and heads of State throughout the world have expressed in condemning

the coup and calling for President Zelaya to be restored to power. However, we wish to issue a grave warning that the coup in Honduras is not an isolated event; a total counter-revolution is being plotted and carried out throughout the world against those peoples and Governments that are raising the flags of freedom, self-determination and sovereignty. Today, we must build and coordinate a great international front for democracy and against fascism — which is rising again here and there, as demonstrated in the recent European elections — against violence and for peace. These are now essential tasks.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): From the outset, the Government of Mexico has categorically condemned the arrest of the constitutional President of Honduras and appealed to all parties involved for the immediate restoration of the rule of law and democratic institutions and values, as well as for the return of President Zelaya Rosales to his office.

I should now like to make the following statement on behalf of the Rio Group, which represents all States of Latin America and the Caribbean.

> "The Rio Group expresses its strongest condemnation of the coup d'état perpetrated in the Republic of Honduras, which has violated the democratic constitutional order in that country by illegitimately removing from his office the constitutional President, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales. The Rio Group also rejects the use of armed force and the arbitrary detention of the head of executive power, who was forced to leave Honduras.
>
> "The Rio Group believes that the breach of constitutional order is inadmissible and unacceptable, and that it constitutes a practice that the societies of Latin America and the Caribbean have rejected categorically. The Rio Group reiterates that adherence to democratic values and principles and strict respect for constitutional order and the rule of law should prevail over all political differences.
>
> "The States members of the Group express their full readiness to contribute to the immediate restoration of constitutional order in Honduras. They also call upon all political actors of the Republic of Honduras to avoid violence, and they demand the immediate, unconditional restoration to his functions of the legitimate constitutional President of the Republic, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, and of all other democratically constituted powers."

I would like to add that Patricia Rodas, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Honduras, arrived in Mexico yesterday, and today is travelling to Managua with the President of Mexico, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, to attend the meeting there of the Central American Integration System. Regional forums are responding to the Honduran crisis.

It is important that the General Assembly take into account that yesterday the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) approved a declaration in which it resolved, first, to condemn vehemently the coup d'état against the constitutionally established Government of Honduras, and the arbitrary detention and expulsion from the country of the constitutional President, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, which has produced an unconstitutional alteration of the democratic order.

Secondly, it demanded the immediate, safe and unconditional return of President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales to his constitutional functions.

Thirdly, it declared that no Government arising from this unconstitutional interruption would be recognized.

Fourthly, it instructed the Secretary-General of OAS to urgently attend the meeting of the Central American Integration System that was to take place in Managua, Nicaragua, and in accordance with article 20 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, to carry out all necessary consultations with the member States of the Organization.

Fifthly, it vehemently condemned all acts of violence and especially the reported arbitrary detention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Patricia Rodas, other ministers of Government, as well as the Mayor of San Pedro Sula, and associated individuals, and demanded that their physical safety and security be respected and that they be released immediately.

Sixthly, it immediately convened a special session of the OAS General Assembly to take place on Tuesday, 30 June 2009, to take whatever decisions it considered appropriate, in accordance with the Charter of the Organization of American States, international law, and the provisions of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Finally, it instructed the Secretary-General of OAS to transmit the resolution to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Mr. Palouš (Czech Republic): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia; Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

On 28 June, foreign ministers of the European Union strongly condemned the military actions directed against democratically elected President Zelaya and part of his cabinet, violating the constitutional order of Honduras. The European Union urges the immediate release of all detained government representatives and calls on all relevant parties and institutions to refrain from violence and to strive to find a swift and peaceful solution to the current situation. This should be done in accordance with the existing constitutional order of Honduras and the principles of the rule of law and democracy.

The European Union highlights the importance of restoring the constitutionality and stability of the political and security situation in the country, and underlines the importance of ensuring that fair, timely and transparent presidential elections be held in November 2009. Constitutional rules and respect for human rights are the cornerstones of democratic governance throughout the world.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): What happened yesterday in Honduras was a simple coup d'état, with no need for any ornament or explanation. The pro tempore presidency of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) has issued the following statement:

> "The pro tempore presidency of UNASUR emphatically rejects the attempted coup d'état in Honduras and gives its fullest support to the constitutionally elected Government of José Manuel Zelaya. UNASUR does not recognize any situation involving a breach of the democratic order or the rule of law, or that jeopardizes the stability of the Republic of Honduras. It especially condemns the kidnapping of President Zelaya and his ministers and the taking of Government buildings by groups seeking to destabilize democracy, and expresses its determination not to recognize any Government other than that which is legal and legitimately elected. It calls for the restoration of democracy and the immediate return to power of the democratically elected President, José Manuel Zelaya. Lastly, UNASUR expresses its conviction that internal conflicts should be resolved solely within the framework of democratic institutions and the rule of law."

Finally, a declaration issued yesterday by the Government of Chile emphatically condemns the coup d'état in Honduras, which violates constitutional order in Honduras and flagrantly flouts the provisions of the Charter of the Organization of American States and its fundamental institutions. The Government of Chile calls for the restoration of democracy in Honduras and the immediate reinstatement of its legitimately elected President, José Manuel Zelaya.

Mr. Moreno Fernández (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate and support the timely convening of the General Assembly session to consider the tragic events taking place in the Republic of Honduras, a Latin American sister nation and prestigious member of this Organization.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, I will read out the entire statement that was recently adopted by the 118 members of the Non-Aligned Movement on the situation created as a result of the military coup d'état against the constitutional President of the Republic of Honduras.

> "The Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement expresses its strongest condemnation of the coup d'état carried out in the early hours of yesterday morning, Sunday, 28 June, against the constitutional President of the Republic of Honduras, a sister nation that is a full member of the Non-Aligned Movement.
>
> "The Coordinating Bureau categorically rejects the breach of the democratic constitutional order that has taken place in the Republic of Honduras, as well as all violent actions against the people and legitimate Government of that country.

"By reaffirming its adherence to the principles and purposes governing the Non-Aligned Movement, including the principle of the rejection of unconstitutional change of governments, the Coordinating Bureau calls upon the international community to strongly condemn the coup in the Republic of Honduras.

"The Coordinating Bureau expresses its full support to and solidarity with the people and constitutional Government of the Republic of Honduras in the current circumstances and calls for the reinstatement of the rule of law in that country and the immediate and unconditional reinstatement of the functions of the sole legitimate representative of the Honduran people, President Manuel Zelaya."

The clear position of the Non-Aligned Movement that I have just read out, reflects the unanimous voice of the international community against the coup d'état in Honduras. Countless Governments, international organizations and personalities, including the United Nations Secretary-General, have already expressed themselves in this regard in a strong and united voice.

Allow me now to continue my statement in my national capacity, on behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Cuba. First of all, I wish to align myself with the statements made by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas.

Cuba strongly condemns the brutal and criminal military coup d'état that has taken place in the sister nation of the Republic of Honduras and calls for the immediate reinstatement of the rule of law in that country. By acting in the same manner as the most cruel and violent Latin American dictatorships of the past, the pro-coup military attacked the residence of President Zelaya by dark of night and force of arms.

They staged the coup to silence the voice of the people and to prevent an important democratic referendum that would have taken place on Sunday in Honduras. Foreign Minister Patricia Rodas and the ambassadors of Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela were kidnapped and beaten by the pro-coup military, in flagrant violation of international law and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Other members of the constitutional Honduran Government and their relatives are facing persecution and outrages.

The tragic events in Honduras immediately remind us of similar events that have taken place all too often in Latin America. How can we fail to remember the airplanes and tanks that, under General Pinochet, shelled the presidential palace in Santiago de Chile on 11 September 1973, where President Salvador Allende died heroically? How can we forget the bloody coup against President Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala? How can we forget the military Governments that caused tens of thousands of deaths on the soil of many Latin American countries in the 1970s to 1980s? How can we forget the treacherous attempted coup against President Chávez in Venezuela in 2002, which was frustrated by the people on the streets?

The underhanded coup in Honduras is a coup against us all. It is a coup against the sacred values upheld by the United Nations. It cannot go unpunished. We cannot negotiate with those who took part in the coup because that would make us complicit in legitimizing a usurper Government created by the use of force.

Cuba calls upon all States, international and regional organizations and all other members of the international community to unequivocally condemn the coup d'état, to disregard the spurious authorities that have imposed themselves on Honduras and to demand the reinstatement of the rule of law in that country, including the immediate and unconditional return and full reinstatement of the functions of the only legitimate representative of the Honduran people, President Manuel Zelaya.

Cuba and Honduras are closely linked by history. During the time of insurrections in Cuba in the nineteenth century, Honduras was a refuge for numerous independence fighters expelled from our homeland for conspiring against the colonial Power. In times of crisis, Cuba has always given the Honduran people its support and solidarity, including at times when there were no diplomatic relations between our Governments.

José Martí, the apostle of Cuban independence, rightly said that Honduras is a generous nation in which we must have faith. Cuba has every faith in the Honduran people. Those promoting hatred and violence will never break the will of a humble but brave and grateful people which, since the time of the rebel Chief Lempira and following the example of

patriot Francisco Morazán, have always shown an indomitable spirit of resistance and defence of justice.

History cannot be erased in a moment. Sooner rather than later, truth and justice will again shine out in the homeland of Morazán. Latin America has learned its lesson and has greatly changed. The time of military dictatorships and forcibly imposed Governments is gone and will never return. Our region will not allow a backward step in its fight for a better future for our peoples. The people and constitutional Government of Honduras can always count on the solidarity and unconditional support of Cuba.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, we would like to associate ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the Rio Group, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas and the Non-Aligned Movement.

We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I thought we would never again have to meet on the issue of Central America, which we had to address in this very forum in the 1980s as a result of the acts of aggression in our region, and in particular against our country. I thought those were events of the past, but today all of us are here to commit ourselves to reject and never again allow an act of aggression against the people of Honduras and their constitutional order, or against Central America.

At dawn yesterday, the Republic of Honduras, the homeland of Franciso Morazán, hero and founding father of Central American independence, was humiliated, violated and trampled underfoot by a coterie of Honduran soldiers who carried out a coup d'état while in the pay of a Honduran oligarchy that has yet to understand the new reality of our peoples and that the people are the sole genuine sovereigns in every country of the world. To the brotherly people of Honduras, Nicaragua would like to say that the Sandino nation rejects the coup in the most categorical terms. We will spare no effort to ensure that our brother President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales is restored to his functions, thereby fully re-establishing constitutional law and order in Honduras. We call on the Honduran people, armed with their historic courage, to continue to mobilize peacefully and to prevent those who carried out the coup from becoming their executioners.

Those who carried out the coup, who are the ill-fated puppets of a right-wing of times past, should know that, for the first time in its history, the Americas as a whole, from Canada to Tierra del Fuego, has unanimously rejected and condemned in the most explicit terms the coup d'état perpetrated yesterday. They should also know that the General Assembly demands that the rule of law be respected and that President Zelaya be unconditionally and immediately returned to Tegucigalpa as the sole constitutional leader of Honduras. Moreover, they should know that the leaders of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) began meeting in Managua last night, where they have unequivocally, resolutely and overwhelmingly condemned the coup d'état carried out by the soldiers. They should also know that, following the summit held on 2 June, during which Cuba's notorious exclusion was brought to an end, the Organization of American States yesterday also condemned the suspension of the constitutional order in the most emphatic terms. They should know that, at this very moment in the Nicaraguan capital of Managua, the leaders of the Latin American Integration System and of the Rio Group, along with those of ALBA, are making their positions known with the same unwavering conviction. They should know that there is no corner of the Americas or the world that will recognize those who carried out the coup d'état. Wherever they may hide, we will dislodge them with the power of democracy and the solidarity of the peoples of Morazán, Sandino, Martí, Bolívar and San Martín. They should know that there are no longer any banana republics on the continent where oligarchies can continue to exploit the peoples of the Americas with impunity.

The tragic irony is that, in running roughshod over a sovereign people and depriving them of their inalienable right to express themselves in a popular referendum, those who carried out the coup claim to be acting in favour of democracy. The shamelessness of the logic employed by those holdovers from the history of Latin America and the Caribbean is clear. Just imagine the retrograde and extreme right character of the coup perpetrators, who have committed the supreme act of treason because their democratically elected President dared, in carrying out a law on citizen participation, to consult the people on a possible referendum next November. In other words, those who carried out the coup have acted because the President of all Hondurans has sought the opinion of his people

on the possibility of holding a referendum. What would have happened if President Zelaya had directly carried out the referendum? He would probably have been sent directly before a firing squad, instead of being forcibly sent into exile.

Who can talk about elections in Honduras at this moment? Given the circumstances facing the people of Honduras, we cannot talk about elections. Who would call them? Military coup plotters who violate the Constitution? Before we can talk about elections, we must restore the democratically elected Government and its President.

We warn against any bloodshed in Honduras, and demand the immediate and unconditional release of those who have disappeared or been kidnapped. Likewise, we condemn the violence through which, in the course of several hours yesterday, Minister Patricia Rodas was kidnapped. She is a woman who has demonstrated incredible courage in the service of justice and the struggle of peoples in solidarity. We also denounce and condemn the cowardly and violent abduction of the ambassadors of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, who accompanied Minister Rodas. That flagrant violation of international law, and in particular of the Vienna Convention, is an act of aggression against our respective countries, for which there will be no impunity.

Above and beyond that, it is Honduran democracy that has suffered the most. No martial law or curfew will be able to silence the calls of the Honduran people for the freedom that has been wrested from them. The people, President Zelaya and his Government, along with the peoples of the Americas and the unanimous support of the entire international community, will prevail.

At this tragic time, I would like to recall the words of the hymn from the time of our own liberation from the Somoza dictatorship to tell the Honduran people that they are the owners of their history and the architects of their liberation. I should also like to remind the soldiers who carried out the coup that the children of Morazán cannot be sold out, nor do they give up.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Nicaragua, worthy representative of the heroic Sandino people and Government, for her courageous words.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations A/63/PV.92

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

92nd plenary meeting
Monday, 29 June 2009, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM Governments have noted with great concern the forcible removal from office of the democratically elected President of Honduras, His Excellency Manuel Zelaya, by certain sections of the military, and his forced exile.

We are also deeply concerned by reports that a number of Government officials and diplomatic representatives have been detained and may have been physically harmed.

Our Governments strongly condemn these actions, which are in breach of the principles of respect for the rule of law, human rights and constitutional order. CARICOM maintains its full support for and recognition of President Zelaya and therefore calls for his immediate reinstatement.

We deplore the violence and call upon the perpetrators to desist from these actions so that normalcy can be restored to the country for the benefit of the people of Honduras. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, we affirm our support for OAS in contributing to restoring normalcy to the country and for the use of the good offices of OAS Secretary-General.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. Guatemala would like to align itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Rio Group, the Central American Integration System and the Non-Aligned Movement. We belong to all three groups. But we would like also to present our own national position.

We are meeting today under an agenda item entitled "The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development". In terms of that title, what happened in Honduras this past weekend was an anachronism, and a blow and an offence to all Central Americans. It was not in vain that, after a long period of military dictatorships, each with its own specificities, in four of our five countries — Costa Rica being the very honourable exception — and an equally long period of armed internal conflict in three of those countries, the Central American countries, with the assistance of the international community, embarked on the road leading to peace and democracy. All of us Central Americans had believed that the rule of law had been established, and that our armed forces had had their activities properly limited to the role played by the army in any democratic country.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The people and the Government of my country have therefore condemned in the strongest possible terms the use of force by the Honduran armed forces to resolve the differences between the various State powers. The constitution and the laws of Honduras include mechanisms to resolve this type of situation within the institutional framework and not by attacking it. It is also for this reason that my Government continues to recognize the constitutionally elected Government, led by President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, as the only authority of Honduras. We have reiterated this position in the framework of the Organization of American States, the Rio Group and the Central American Integration System.

I will not make a lengthy statement, given the short time at our disposal. But I did want to share with other delegations our outrage and concern regarding the events that have occurred in Honduras, our demand that President Zelaya be reinstated to the exercise of power and our hope that this constitutional crisis will be resolved within the framework of democratic institutions and the rule of law, for the good of Honduras and all of Central America.

Mr. Caraballo Núñez (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting.

The Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the entirely unambiguous position of our Government, headed by Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, which is to reject and repudiate the coup d'état carried out in Honduras against the legitimate Government headed by Manuel Zelaya Rosales. In that connection, we align ourselves with the statements made on behalf of the Rio Group and of the Non-Aligned Movement.

For the Dominican Republic, this coup d'état represents a step backwards, because it is a violation of the democratic Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS). Thus, the Dominican Government demands full compliance with the call made by OAS for the restitution of the Government of President Zelaya, which is the legitimate democratic Government chosen by the Honduran people. We must support the endeavours of OAS, long recognized as the appropriate forum for the defence of democracy and legality in our region.

The Dominican Republic was the victim of a similar coup d'état, on 25 September 1963, against the legitimate democratic Government of President Juan Bosch. As in the case of President Zelaya, President Bosch was kidnapped and sent abroad. It is obvious that no national law can codify the use of such brutal measures. That period of repeated coups d'état brought some very difficult times to our region, with constant military hostilities and disregard for the will of the people.

This is why the Government of the Dominican Republic understands that this coup d'état must be rejected, lest in the future it have a contagious effect on other countries in the region and return us to an era of barbarism. This affects all of us, because for 30 years the entire region has been going through a process of transition and the consolidation of democracy, a process that was unfortunately interrupted yesterday in Honduras. This is a coup d'état against all the democratic progress we have achieved, and we therefore categorically reject it. President Zelaya must be returned, to carry out his functions as the legitimate President of the Republic of Honduras.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Group of Arab States, I convey to you, Mr. President, our thanks and appreciation for having convened the present series of plenary meetings.

I would like to make the following comments. We firmly believe that disputes between differing parties should be settled through peaceful means. There must be no recourse to violence to resolve such problems. On the basis of that principle, we call for the return of the legitimate Government led by Mr. José Manuel Zelaya, the legitimate President of Honduras. We call for the liberation of those detained and for guarantees of their lives and liberty. The sacred character of the constitution must be respected. It is necessary to turn to the people for a peaceful resolution of whatever problems there may be among the parties in Honduras.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your initiative to convene this series of plenary meetings of the General Assembly to discuss the situation in Honduras. I would like to associate myself with the statements delivered by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Brazil has vehemently condemned the military action that resulted in the deposition of the President of Honduras, Mr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, and his departure from the country. My Government has also called for President Zelaya to be returned to his functions immediately and unconditionally.

Actions of this type constitute an attack against democracy and are not in keeping with the political development of the region. Constitutional questions must always be peacefully resolved within the existing institutional framework.

We are encouraged by the fact that this attack against the democratic constitutional order in Honduras has been unanimously condemned by the international community, in particular by the countries of the region and by regional cooperation organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Common Market of the South, UNASUR, the Rio Group and the Central American Integration System. It is particularly important that the Permanent Council of OAS, in a special meeting yesterday, vigorously rejected the coup d'état and demanded the immediate, secure and constitutional return of President Zelaya to his functions. The Permanent Council decision to convene a special session of the OAS General Assembly to take the necessary decisions pursuant to the Inter-American Democratic Charter to deal with the situation was also very timely and appropriate.

We support the efforts of OAS, which possesses all the political and legal instruments necessary to support democracy in Honduras and make an effective contribution to the return of the country to democratic normalcy. Brazil will continue to participate actively in those efforts.

Ms. Espinosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the timely convening of this series of meetings. My delegation would like to align itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Rio Group, Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of the Americas (ALBA) and Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Faithful to the norms of international law, the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular the provisions of Articles 55 and 56, and the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, Ecuador would like to reiterate its most vigorous rejection of the coup d'état committed against the legitimately constituted Government of President Manuel Zelaya and to express our solidarity with the people of Honduras.

We would also like to support the immediate response by the Organization of American States (OAS) and its decision to convene an emergency special session of the OAS General Assembly. We reaffirm our support for the 21 June declaration of the Permanent Council, through which that regional organization rejects and repudiates this unconstitutional attack against democratic order and demands the immediate, secure and unconditional return of President Manuel Zelaya Rosales to his constitutional functions as well as that of all of the officials in his Government.

In this regard, Ecuador, as a member of ALBA, would like to highlight the meeting of heads of State organized to lend its unreserved support to the democratic regime in Honduras. ALBA also unconditionally supports the legitimately constituted Government of President Zelaya and demands that the forces behind the coup d'état in Honduras put an end to this violation of the norms of democratic coexistence and the rule of international law.

I would like to reiterate that, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, Fander Falconí, has stated, my country will not recognize any Government other than that of President Zelaya and demands that the right of peoples to be consulted be respected.

We also want to bring to the attention of the Assembly the statements made by President Rafael Correa, who called upon the people of Honduras to peacefully resist and protest against the de facto powers in that country. Ecuador is concerned about the attack against the constitutional order in the Republic of Honduras and reaffirms that the United Nations General Assembly must demand the immediate return of President Zelaya to the functions for which he was democratically elected and demand full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States.

Lastly, Ecuador supports your excellent initiative, Sir, to invite President Zelaya to personally address the General Assembly.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I wish to thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting. My delegation associates itself with the

statement made by the Permanent Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and wishes to make the following statement.

In line with the principles and commitments it has signed on to in the international arena, Algeria reaffirms its strong condemnation of governmental change by unconstitutional means, wherever it may occur throughout the world. This principled position is based on its attachment to the principles of the United Nations Charter. It was consecrated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, in line with the Algiers Decision adopted at the 1999 summit of the Organization of African Unity, and confirmed in 2000 by the organization in the Lomé Declaration.

Algeria associates itself with the international movement condemning the arbitrary arrest of President Manuel Zelaya, which is aimed at cutting his mandate short, and calls for the unconditional re-establishment of constitutional order in Honduras. Algeria demands the reinstitution of the legitimate Government of Honduras, with the legitimate President Manuel Zelaya at its head. Algeria expresses its solidarity with the countries of Latin America in all their endeavours to establish constitutional justice in Honduras.

Ms. DiCarlo (United States of America): Yesterday, the United States joined our fellow members of the Organization of American States (OAS) in condemning the coup and the arbitrary detention and expulsion of President Zelaya and in calling for the full restoration of constitutional order. We further joined our OAS colleagues in demanding the safe and unconditional return of President Zelaya to Honduras so that he can resume his constitutional functions.

As stipulated in the resolution adopted by the OAS Permanent Council yesterday, we refuse to recognize any Government of Honduras other than the constitutionally legitimate Government of President Zelaya. President Obama yesterday called on all political and social actors in Honduras to respect democratic norms and the rule of law and to resolve any tensions and disputes peacefully, through dialogue and free of outside influence.

We will continue our work through OAS to determine how best to support the Honduran people as they seek to peacefully restore their constitutional Government, relying on the Inter-American Charter as the pillar for safeguarding democracy in the Western Hemisphere.

We call on the international community to support the efforts of OAS. We call on the international community to join together in solidarity with the Honduran people in demanding the peaceful restoration of democracy and constitutional order in Honduras, and we call on the international community to resist any outside interference in this process.

Mr. Solón-Romero (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Bolivia aligns itself with the statements of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Rio Group and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), of which we are members. All of those statements clearly and energetically condemn the coup d'état carried out in the sister Republic of Honduras. All reject the interruption of the rule of law in Honduras. All call for the immediate restitution of President José Manuel Zelaya as the sole legitimate and constitutional President of Honduras.

For my delegation, it is essential that the restoration process take place as soon as possible. Every day and every hour that pass exacerbate the violation of the rule of law in the sister Republic of Honduras. Bolivia and many other States that have spoken here will recognize no other Government than that of José Manuel Zelaya. The issue is of immense importance, because we have seen in the press how the perpetrators of the coup d'état seek to portray themselves as having carried out a constitutional succession. Nothing is further from the truth, because President Zelaya was expelled from the Republic of Honduras against his will and by force. We cannot accept or admit that what took place was a constitutional succession; it was a coup d'état, and the international community must demand that the officers who undertook the coup return to their barracks.

My country always favours dialogue, but the reinstallation of the legitimate President is paramount. We are deeply concerned about talk of an election process through a provisional Government, whereby the perpetrators of the coup are seeking to consolidate a coup government. Elections will certainly take place in Honduras, but under the presidency of President José Manuel Zelaya. Allowing any provisional Government to carry out an election would make us complicit in the violation of the rule of law in Honduras.

President Evo Morales was among the first to take a stand against the coup d'état in Honduras, and he did so, because just last year we, too, suffered a coup — a civilian coup d'état. Various opposition groups occupied institutions in different parts of the country. Our airports and public offices were occupied, and attempts were made to occupy the military barracks and police headquarters. It was the energetic support of the international community that cut short that attempted coup.

At the time, UNASUR stated clearly in the Moneda declaration that there must be dialogue in Bolivia, but only after the coup perpetrators withdrew from our institutions and the rule of law was re-established. There must be dialogue, but only after the coup perpetrators return to their barracks, and the only dialogue possible at this time is to convince them to do so.

We are concerned that the coup has claimed its first casualty in Honduras. The longer the situation lasts, the greater is the probability of further casualties. Only increased vigilance and determined action on the part of the international community can accelerate the abdication of the perpetrators of the coup.

Last year, when the Plurinational Republic of Bolivia suffered a similar situation perpetrated by reactionary civilian groups, the international community played a key role in maintaining the rule of law. But the other key and decisive factor, without a doubt, was the mobilization of the people and social movements of Bolivia.

In conclusion, the Government and people of Bolivia extend their warmest salutations to President Zelaya and the people of Honduras who have mobilized in the streets against this dictatorial violation.

Mr. Limeres (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. The delegation of Argentina wishes first of all to express its support for the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and by the Permanent Representative of Chile on behalf of the Union of South American Nations.

Mr. Solón-Romero (Plurinational State of Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Republic of Argentina vehemently condemns the coup d'état perpetrated against the legitimately elected Government in Honduras and calls for the unconditional and immediate restoration of President Zelaya to his office. We would also like to stress here the necessity for full respect for the human rights and basic freedoms of the people of Honduras, as well as for the lives and physical safety of all members of the legitimate Government of Honduras.

Mr. Montoya (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation supports the statements made by the representatives of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The events that took place over the weekend in brotherly Honduras are to be deplored both in regard to the situation in Central America and the efforts to make it a region characterized by peace, freedom, democracy and development, a noble goal underscored by item 20 of the agenda of the General Assembly, under which this meeting has been convened.

The Government of Colombia issued a statement yesterday on the events in Honduras. I would like to share with other Member States the deep consternation expressed by our Government over the rupture of the constitutional order in Honduras. My country condemns the acts of force that expelled the legitimately and democratically elected Government of President Manuel Zelaya Rosales, and calls for the full re-establishment of the legally constituted order in Honduras.

My delegation also wishes to express its support for the actions undertaken by the Organization of American States (OAS) with a view to finding democratic solutions to the situation. As has been stated in this meeting, yesterday the Permanent Council of OAS adopted resolution 953, in which it took a stand on this delicate issue. In that resolution, it was agreed to convene a special session of the General Assembly of OAS on Tuesday, 30 June to adopt the necessary measures. Colombia appreciates the role of that regional organization and will lend its support to the speedy adoption of its decisions.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): At the outset, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines aligns itself with the statements made on

behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Non-Aligned Movement and the States members of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines categorically condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the coup d'état engineered by the armed forces of Honduras against the legitimately elected Government of José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, President of the Republic of Honduras. This action is illegal and wholly unwarranted, and represents a gross violation of the rule of law and the norms of civilized nations. We call for the immediate restoration of the constitutional order, including the restoration to power of President Zelaya and his Government, and for the full respect of democratic norms.

The leaders of the Honduran military have dishonoured themselves in this naked grab for power. In violently forcing President Zelaya into temporary exile, kidnapping sitting members of the Government and violating international law through the abduction, physical mistreatment and abuse of foreign diplomats, the architects of this shameful coup d'état have indeed heralded a return to barbarism, as stated by President Cristina Fernández of Argentina.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines joins those nations that have called unequivocally for the immediate return of President Zelaya to his legitimately elected post and duties. We do not recognize the purported new Government of Honduras, and urge other nations to similarly reject any Government other than the one freely chosen by the people of Honduras.

In our hemisphere, we have firmly turned the page on an ignominious chapter of anti-democratic military power grabs, unsupported by the vast majority of the people and encouraged solely by a selfish and short-sighted elite. We urge international solidarity in condemning this cowardly and anti-democratic action and in demanding the prompt return to office of President Zelaya and his Government. We all have an obligation to ensure that the popular will is respected through prompt restoration of the democratic order.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expresses particular concern and outrage as a member of the Caribbean Community. One of our members, Belize, is a near neighbour of Honduras, and the current unrest therefore directly touches and concerns the central interests of our subregion. Similarly, as a signatory to the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, we are doubly outraged at this brutal and criminal affront to democratic institutions, safety and stability of a brother State.

It is through the solidarity, unanimity and unequivocal condemnation of all subregional, regional and international multilateral institutions, including the Organization of American States and the United Nations, that this despicable aberration will be beaten back into the dustbin of obsolete and discredited extrajudicial tactics.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also salutes the bravery of the Honduran people, who have signalled their rejection of those illegal and barbaric acts by the military and its co-conspirators. We continue to urge a peaceful resolution to this conflict, and call for a non-violent restoration of the constitutional order. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines therefore reiterates its solidarity with President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, his Government and the noble people of Honduras.

Permit me, like my brother the Permanent Representative of Cuba, to quote José Martí, the apostle of Cuban independence, who said that "one just principle from the depths of a cave is more powerful than an army". Today we must reaffirm the just principles of human rights, democracy, non-violence and respect for the rule of law. With firm adherence to those just principles and with the unstinting support of the international community, the people of Honduras shall soon prove to be more powerful than the military dictators.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express the gratitude of the delegation of El Salvador for the initiative to convene this meeting of the General Assembly to address the current worrisome emergency situation in the brotherly Republic of Honduras.

In that connection, the Government of El Salvador has, through its President, Mr. Carlos Mauricio Funes Cartagena, expressed its wholehearted rejection and vigorous condemnation of the breakdown of the constitutional order in the Republic of Honduras. We have also called for all of the national institutions of Honduras, as well as all international bodies, to contribute to the reinstitution of democratic governance in that country as soon as possible,

including the immediate restoration of constitutional President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales.

Moreover, my Government demands respect for and faithful compliance with the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which has been endorsed by all countries members of the Organization of American States. We also demand observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular our common responsibility to resolve conflicts by peaceful means and in line with current international law in order to make a contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. At the same time, my country demands full respect for the human rights and physical and moral integrity of the Honduran people, including that of Honduran Government officials and members of the diplomatic community accredited to that brotherly country.

The Government of El Salvador associates itself with the position of the Rio Group. We also emphasize the validity of article 2 of the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, according to which the Central American model is to be based, among other things, on the rule of law, the existence of security under the law, the effective exercise of civil liberties and the unequivocal and democratic principle of the subordination of armed forces, police and public security forces to constitutionally established civil authorities chosen in free and pluralist electoral processes.

We have also condemned the illegal detention of Government cabinet members, other officials of the Republic of Honduras and civil society leaders. We demand their immediate release and respect for their physical well-being. El Salvador does not recognize any person or group of persons who have illegitimately assumed the presidency of the Republic of Honduras by means of a coup against the constitutional order carried out by certain sectors of the Honduran population.

We would also like to express our support for the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to invite President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales to address the General Assembly as soon as possible.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union.

As Ambassador Reina Idiaquez, Permanent Representative of Honduras, himself said at the beginning of this debate, I too would like to point out that Spain was among the first countries to express its position following the news of the hostile action that took place yesterday in the brotherly Republic of Honduras. Also yesterday, Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Spanish Government, issued a communiqué, which I would now like to summarize.

The President of the Government of Spain expressed his most emphatic condemnation of the illegal detention and expulsion of José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, constitutional President of the Republic of Honduras. He demanded his immediate return to the office to which he had been democratically elected and reiterated his belief that dialogue and respect for democratic standards are the sole means for finding a resolution to any dispute.

The President of the Spanish Government also asserted the unacceptability of altering the constitutional order and democratic stability of Honduras by means of the events that have taken place. He emphasized that there could never be a solution to the Honduran crisis outside the country's constitutional framework.

The President of our Government also expressed his support for the Organization of American States and his hope that the mission to be deployed by that organization to Honduras would lead to a candid and respectful dialogue that observed the institutional roles of all of the political and social stakeholders in Honduras.

The communiqué concludes by expressing the Spanish Government's resolve to continue to cooperate with other countries of the Ibero-American region, the European Union and the international community to find a way out of the current crisis. We therefore reiterate Spain's full commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights throughout the world, and in particular in Latin America, with which we have ties of every sort. We would also like to express our solidarity with the people of Honduras, their legitimately elected President and their democratic system, which we hope will ultimately emerge strengthened from this difficult challenge.

Mr. Hernández-Milian (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by associating my country with the statement delivered by the

Ambassador of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group. We also support the resolution adopted by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States and the declaration of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Central American Integration System.

Yesterday morning, once the plane transporting President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales landed at the airport in San José, Costa Rica, President Óscar Arias Sánchez immediately went to the air base to receive President Zelaya as a head of State, special guest and friend, given President Zelaya's close ties with our country.

The Government of Costa Rica has emphatically condemned the events taking place in our neighbouring sister country in Central America yesterday. We deplore the way in which President Zelaya was forced to leave his country. President Óscar Arias immediately called on all the countries of the continent to condemn the coup d'état in Honduras and stated:

> "We believed that the long night of dictatorships in Latin America was over. This is a lamentable step backwards for democracy in Honduras, Central America and Latin America. This breakdown of the constitutional order is unacceptable."

My Government regrets that some civilians, political leaders and sectors of the population in Honduras have welcomed the coup d'état merely because they do not agree with the positions of the Government in office. In this context, we support the energetic condemnation issued by the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Central American Integration System last night in Managua, demanding the immediate restoration of the President of Honduras. We reject, as stated by the ministers, the perversion of legal standards that is being used to justify this breakdown in the constitutional and democratic order in Honduras. Naturally, we also condemn the illegal arrests that have taken place.

For Costa Rica, it is essential that general elections be held in November 2009 as planned, which we expect will be carried out with an international presence and under the presidency of Manuel Zelaya. Costa Rica is firm in its demand that President Zelaya be reinstated, and we will not support any interim leadership between now and the elections. We call for respect for human rights by everyone in Honduras. We trust that subregional and regional institutions, with the support of this Organization, will be able to find the key to ensuring the immediate return to constitutional order in the sister Republic of Honduras.

Ms. Francis Lanuza (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting to discuss this important issue.

The delegation of Panama would like to reiterate the statement it delivered this morning, during the Conference on the World Economic and Financial Crisis, on the situation in our sister Republic of Honduras, which is unacceptable to our Government. Panama also fully supports the statements of the representatives of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We reiterate our categorical rejection of the acts to destabilize democracy that took place yesterday in Honduras, whereby an illegitimate military action was carried out against the constitutional Government of President Manuel Zelaya.

President Martin Torrijos has expressed his most energetic condemnation of the coup d'état, during which the President of the Republic of Honduras was kidnapped and expelled from the country. The Latin American and Caribbean region has been enjoying an admirable democratization process, and our peoples engaged in perfecting and consolidating that democracy. This makes any attempt to take us back to the times of political conspiracy — or changes of Governments against the will of the people as legitimately expressed by lawful means — all the more unacceptable.

Panama expresses its solidarity with the Government of President Zelaya and calls on the international community to reject acts of destabilization in order to enable an immediate restoration of constitutional order in the Republic of Honduras, with the immediate reinstatement of President Zelaya to the full exercise of his functions.

We also support the efforts of regional and international institutions and agencies, such as the Organization of American States and the Central American Integration System secretariat, which have expressed their solidarity and taken a stand against this difficult situation, which endangers the progress achieved in consolidating democracy in Central America.

Finally, Panama demands respect for the integrity and dignity of the other people who have been arrested, kidnapped or disappeared in the course of this deplorable military action.

Mrs. Coye-Felson (Belize): Belize associates itself with the statements that have been delivered on behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Rio Group and the Non-Aligned Movement.

We take this opportunity, as a member of the Central American family, to express the full solidarity of the people and Government of Belize with our neighbours, the people and the constitutional Government of Honduras. In so doing, we proclaim the supremacy of the rule of law, constitutional order and democracy. We condemn absolutely the instrumentalities of force that have threatened these fundamental pillars of peace and security. We call for the return to constitutional order and the immediate reinstatement of President José Manuel Zelaya to his constitutional functions.

Belize lends its full support to all efforts in accordance with international law at the subregional and regional levels, through the Organization of American States, in order to ensure the full respect for the rule of law and democracy in Honduras.

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru welcomes the initiative of convening a meeting of the General Assembly to urgently address the situation in the sister Republic of Honduras. We welcome the fact that, as evidenced in the course of this debate, Honduras enjoys the greatest possible international solidarity and support.

We also want to welcome the invitation extended to President José Manuel Zelaya to address the Assembly as soon as possible. It is encouraging to see the way that Member States have expressed their vigorous condemnation of the interruption of the constitutional order in Honduras.

Consequently, on this occasion, we would like to share with the Assembly the position of the Peruvian Government, as expressed yesterday in the following terms:

> "The Government of Peru expresses its energetic condemnation of the breakdown of the constitutional order in Honduras that occurred today. Peru reiterates its call for the preservation of democratic institutions with full respect for the rule of law and the legal order in Honduras, and firmly supports the efforts currently being undertaken by the Organization of American States (OAS) to restore democracy to that sister nation, pursuant to the principles of the Charter of the OAS and the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Peru will closely follow developments in the situation and will remain in ongoing consultations with the other States of the region."

In accordance with this position, Peru associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group, the representative of Chile on behalf of Union of South American Nations, and the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The international community must make a peaceful and effective contribution to the re-establishment of the constitutional order in Honduras. Peru believes that regional organizations have a primary role to play in this regard and have been fulfilling that duty in a commendable manner. The OAS has a long history of defending and promoting democracy in the region, and we believe that we must all support its current efforts.

Finally, allow me to make a clarification. This morning, the President of the Assembly referred to my country as among those that had adopted legislation to extend presidential terms. This indeed happened in 1993, but it was revoked in 2000. Therefore, in Peru, presidents may not be immediately re-elected. This does not mean that other countries cannot adopt whatever legislation on this subject they may consider appropriate, in strict compliance with their constitutional processes.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of Uruguay, I associate myself with the statements made by the representatives of Mexico and Chile on behalf of the Rio Group and the Union of South American Nations, respectively.

Aware as I am of the recent events in the Republic of Honduras, I would like to express the support of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay for the democratic institutions in that sister nation of Latin America and emphatically condemn the kidnapping and expulsion of President José Manuel Zelaya, in open violation of the constitutional order. We also condemn all acts of violence, in particular the arbitrary arrests of Minister for Foreign Affairs Patricia Rodas

and the Ambassadors of Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, in flagrant violation of international law and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Our country will remain attentive to the decisions of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, which is meeting in special session to consider this crisis situation. Its actions have our full support.

It is with sorrow that we note the repetition of events that we believed were finally and forever buried in the past. Once again, sabre-rattling would silence the legitimate and sovereign voice of the people. We know through our own historical experience that sabre-rattling is followed by silence — the silence of freedoms denied, the silence of those who have been disappeared, the silence of death. No act of vanity, no messianic posturing, no one — absolutely no one — can be allowed to take precedence over the constitutional order that peoples have democratically attributed to themselves, in full freedom, to regulate their civic life.

A Honduran Government without democratic legitimacy and hostile to constitutional order will never find an interlocutor in Uruguay.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde) (*spoke in French*): What is happening today in Honduras is repulsive to our democratic conscience and a serious warning to all democracies and to all those who fight throughout the world for the most fundamental right of nations to live freely in justice and peace without the interference of armed men. The African Union in its Charter and in its resolutions and declarations throughout the years has firmly condemned coups d'état and attacks against democracy and legitimately formed Governments.

Cape Verde firmly denounces all anti-constitutional attacks that undermine the rule of law and bring about a breakdown of its democratic foundations. Cape Verde associates itself with the many appeals, in particular those of countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, for a safe and secure return of President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales and the re-establishment of constitutional order in Honduras.

We support the efforts of the Organization of American States to help Honduras and to re-establish democracy in that country. We welcome the unified position of its members on the basis of these principles, and we hope their efforts will be crowned with success.

Indeed, we strongly believe that this is a coup not only against the President of Honduras, but against all people who aspire to live in peace and democracy. It is not only an anachronism in terms of history, but also an insult to the future of the world. On behalf of the right of the people of Honduras to live in peace and democracy, today it is not just a handful of countries that are demanding the restitution of law. The entire world, through the voice of the General Assembly, is saying "enough" to military rule and demanding that an end be put to all coups d'état in every country and in the international community.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I salute the people of Honduras, I salute the people of the Americas and I salute President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales. As those who opposed the dictatorship sang following the death of President Salvador Allende in the Moneda Palace, they shall not pass.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this issue.

Tomorrow we will be honoured to have with us, at 11 a.m., President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales of Honduras. Immediately after that, we will proceed to take action on a draft resolution that is currently being prepared. Anyone wishing to do so may become a sponsor of that draft resolution.

The representative of Honduras has asked for the floor.

Mr. Reina Idiaquez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would very briefly like to note that we are in the process of reaching consensus on a draft resolution that we will be ready to introduce later today or as soon as possible, so that it might reflect the opinions of all of those of us who have condemned the events in our country.

The President: I thank the representative of Honduras for that clarification.

Today is a sad day. Yesterday was a sad day and today continues to be sad, but there is also quite a bit that we should be happy about. Unity among all of us has been manifest — unity in the repudiation of what we have, in unison, to repudiate clearly and categorically if we are going to have a better world. This is a time that calls for clarity, not ambiguity in our speech.

In that sense, I was very glad to hear all of the statements made here. There were very few exceptions that were perhaps a bit ambiguous, perhaps one. On the other hand, I was very glad to hear our sister, the representative of the United States, saying something that I will attempt to quote as I recall it. She said something to the effect that the United States will only recognize the constitutional President, José Manuel Zelaya, and that it would not recognize any other who might come forward as a result of this coup d'état. We hope this coup d'état will come to an end very soon.

I think that that is, without a doubt, the feeling that we have expressed here. We do not recognize any other Government than the legitimate, constitutional Government of Honduras. We should also recall and utilize such unity whenever our respective democracies are threatened by similar efforts in other latitudes.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 20.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.